

In The Claims

1. (Amended) A mail delivery ~~apparatus~~ system for delivery of mail to a user's physical address comprising:

a storage device; and

a processor ~~coupled~~ connected to the storage device;

the storage device storing:

_____ a program for controlling the processor; and

~~a database containing attributes of a plurality of printing locations,~~

the processor operative with the program to

receive an electronic message that includes message attributes including a message recipient and printing criteria;

determine a recipient physical address responsive to the message recipient attribute contained with the electronic message;

compare the message recipient physical address with a the plurality of printing locations;

~~query the printing locations having a desired set of attributes responsive to the printing criteria attributes contained within the electronic message;~~

select one of the printing locations based at least in part on the results of said compare; and

send the electronic message to the selected printing location.

2. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, in which

the processor is further operative with the program to:

query the printing locations having a desired set of attributes
responsive to the printing criteria contained with the electronic message, and
receive replies from the printing locations responsive to the query; and
said select of one of the printing locations is further based at least in part on
~~responsive to the replies.~~

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3. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, further including a database for storing a user record, said record having a counter measuring use of the mail delivery apparatus system and operative with a promotional program to effect awarding prizes to the user.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, the database further including a plurality of advertisements, advertising attributes and recipient demographics, in which the processor is further operative with the program to:


compare the advertising attributes to the recipient demographics;
select at least one of the advertisements; and
attached the selected advertisement(s) to the electronic message.

5. (Amended) A method for converting an electronically generated message to a physical mail object to be delivered to a mail recipient's physical mail address, comprising:

accessing an intermediate node from a sender's node on a global communication network;
after accessing the intermediate node, transmitting information to the intermediate node including message, message recipient, and printing criteria;

locating in a database at ~~the intermediate node~~ the physical address information of the mail recipient;

~~querying~~ comparing the physical address information of the mail recipient to locations of a plurality of printing stations distributed across the global communications network;

 generating at ~~the intermediate node~~ a printing instruction to print the message for delivery to the mail recipient at the recipient physical address, for a selected one of the printing stations, responsive to at least the information received from the sender's node ~~the result of said comparing;~~ and

sending the printing instruction to ~~the~~ a selected one of the printing stations to perform said printing for said delivery ~~responsive to the step of querying the plurality of printing stations.~~

6. (Amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the method further comprises querying the plurality of printing stations for printing station information, and storing the information from each of the printing stations is stored ~~at the intermediate node.~~

7. (Cancelled) ~~The method of claim 5, wherein the printing station information includes the geographic location of the printing station.~~

8. (Amended) The method of claim 65, wherein the printing station information includes a printing capability of the printing station.


9. (Amended) The method of claim 65, wherein the printing station information includes a printing capacity of the printing station.

10. (Amended) The method of claim 65, further includes ~~the steps of~~:

accepting bids from a plurality of advertisers having associated advertisements;

selecting one or more advertisements based upon the bids; and

inserting the selected one or more advertisements within the printing instruction.

 11. (Amended) A method for using a computer to facilitate communication between a message sender and at least one intended recipient, comprising:

inputting into the computer a message;

inputting into the computer a recipient physical address corresponding to the intended recipient of the message;

outputting the message and the recipient physical address electronically to a mail server;


~~querying~~ comparing the recipient physical address with a plurality of distributed printing locations;

distributing the message to a selected one of the plurality of printing locations responsive to at least the result of said comparing step of ~~querying the plurality of distributed printing locations; and~~


printing the message at the selected one of the plurality of locations for delivery; and

~~delivering the printed message to the intended recipient.~~

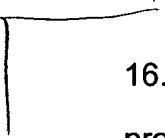
12. (Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the ~~step of querying~~ comparing includes calculating a goodness factor based in part upon a proximity of the plurality of distributed printing locations to the recipient physical address.



13. (Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the ~~step of querying method~~ further includes calculating a goodness factor based in part upon a capacity of the plurality of distributed printing locations, and the selecting is further based on the goodness factor.

 14. (Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the ~~step of querying method~~ further includes calculating a goodness factor based in part upon a capability of the plurality of distributed printing locations, and the selecting is further based on the goodness factor.

15. (Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the ~~step of querying method~~ further includes calculating a goodness factor based in part upon a price per impression bid by of the plurality of distributed printing locations, and the selecting is further based on the goodness factor.

 16. (Amended) A method for dynamically arranging advertisements within a printed product delivered to a recipient, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

- storing a plurality of advertisements within an electronic storage system;
- identifying which of the stored advertisements are in a ready state;
- for each ready state advertisement, setting a base priority value;
- modifying the base priority value according to predetermined criteria;
- sorting the ready state advertisements into a list according to their ~~associated~~ modified priority values;
- re-sorting the list according to ad affinity;
- selecting a subset of ads to be used from the resorted list; and

printing the selected ads onto a printed medium ~~delivered to the recipients.~~

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein ~~the step of~~ resorting the list includes:

associating an ad type with each advertisement on the list ;

comparing the ad type of a first ad on the list with the ad type of a second ad

 on the resorted list; and

reordering the second ad on the resorted list if the first ad type is
incompatible with the second ad type.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, further the steps of:

accessing demographic information of the recipient; and

modifying the base priority value responsive to the accessed demographic
information.
